

Health Mate

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Making Lifestyle Changes is not about Willpower

One of the great benefits of having a well-planned, well-programmed strategy is that it liberates you from a pointless and misguided reliance on willpower. Remember, the notion that you've got to have will power is a myth. Willpower is unreliable emotional fuel, experience at a fever pitch, it may temporarily energize your efforts; once the emotion is gone, however, the train stops. You've had enough false starts in your life to know that there are times when you do not feel motivated, when you do not feel energized. The only way to guarantee forward movement during those downtimes is to design a solid strategic plan that sustains your commitment in the absence of emotional energy. Specifically, your environment must be programmed, your schedule must be programmed, and your accountability must be programmed in such a way that all three support you long after the emotional high is gone.

Respectable Nutrition Websites

Here is a list of websites that are good and reliable for nutrition information:

American Dietetic Association

www.eatright.org

USDA nutrition information center

www.nal.usda.gov/fnic

MEDACCESS

www.medaccess.com/diet_guide/you_eat.htm

Assessment tools, motivation, information etc. - fun! www.cyberdiet.com

An on-line rating and review guide for nutrition websites

www.navigator.tufts.edu

Sports nutrition

www.nutrifit.org

Ask the dietitian

www.dietitian.com

A new federal resource, provides easy access to all online federal government info on Nutrition

www.nutrition.gov

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It's Never Too Late to Get Up and Move

July 25, 2001

NUTRITION NEWS FOCUS "Nutrition news is important. We help you understand it!"

A recent study found that adults who have chronic diseases are less likely to survive if they are inactive. People in Minnesota who were at least 40 years old were analyzed. Those with two or more chronic health conditions (high blood pressure, coronary heart disease, diabetes, or abnormal blood lipids) were surveyed, and over 1,900 subjects were studied prospectively over three and a half years. The results were published in the May 14, 2001 issue of the Archives of Internal Medicine.

< <http://archinte.ama-assn.org/issues/v161n9/abs/loi00408.html> >

Characteristics of those who died that differed significantly from those who did not include: older age, less physical activity, more diabetes, and more impairment of physical activity. Surprisingly, those who died had lower body mass index and lower lipids. But these latter two factors may simply indicate weight loss as a result of the chronic health problems.

HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW: While it is likely that people with greater burden of illness are less likely to exercise, the alternate explanation is that those who exercise are less likely to experience deterioration of their conditions. The difference in number of days with exercise was two versus three. So stop reading and go for a walk.

Child Safety

[Unattended Vehicles Advocates Push Laws/](#)

[Education: 54 Deaths Last Year Attributed to Parents Making Mistakes](#)

The San Francisco Chronicle

Alan Gathright Chronicle Staff Writer

July, 2001

Child safety advocates say people are in denial if they think only an unemployed security guard could make the fatal mistake of leaving his baby strapped in a hot car for hours, as happened in San Jose last week.

Last year, at least 54 children left alone in cars were killed by heatstroke or accidentally pinned by automatic windows. Others died after setting the car rolling or after starting a fire with the cigarette lighter, said Janette Fennell, founder of Kids 'N Cars. The San Francisco nonprofit group advocates public education and legislation to prevent children from needlessly dying in vehicles.

"Last year, eight dads on their way to work left their kids in the car when they forgot to drop them at day care. All the kids died," Fennell said. "None of these were deadbeat dads. There was a NASA engineer, a high school teacher, a Webmaster, a lawyer. These are people who truly forgot the baby was in the back seat."

Last month in Iowa, a mother preoccupied with the pressures of her hospital executive job remembered to drop off her 3-year-old son at day care. But Kari Engholm forgot her 7-month-old daughter until she found her lifeless body in the back of the family minivan at the end of a hot day. She's been charged with involuntary manslaughter. Her husband, who normally dropped the daughter off, said the change in routine and his wife's hectic schedule contributed to the tragedy.

Safety advocates say deaths are a symptom of a society where working parents are too tired, distracted or thrown off by a change in routine. The forgetfulness may be compounded by fatal air-bag accidents in the mid-1990s that spurred parents to place small children in the back seat, where sleeping infants in rear-facing car seats more easily go unnoticed.

"Everyone wants it to be a freak accident. It's not a freak accident when we've got 44 dead children nationally this year," Fennell said.

In the past five years, at least 120 children have died in hot vehicles, according to research by the National SAFE KIDS Campaign and General Motors. Charges were filed in at least 65 cases, but only 26 ended in convictions.

"Generally, many people are charged, but few are convicted, except in the most egregious cases," Fennell said. "There's a sentiment in this society that these parents have paid the ultimate price already."

Kids 'N Cars is sponsoring legislation to make California the 10th state to outlaw leaving young children unattended in cars. The bill, authored by state Sen. Jackie Speier, D-Hillsborough, will impose a \$100 fine when a child under age 7 is left alone but not injured. Child injuries could still trigger felony charges. The fines will be used to fund public education programs, including classes for violators.

A state panel of health care, law enforcement and transportation professionals said the law would give police officers a badly needed tool. Currently, officers are reluctant to arrest a parent when a youngster isn't hurt, because it requires the trauma of taking the child away to be placed in protective custody.

Child advocates say prevention is the real solution.

Too often, well-intentioned parents are tempted to leave a toddler peacefully sleeping in a car seat while dashing into a convenience store for "just a minute" -- which stretches into 10 minutes, said Heather Paul, executive director of the National SAFE KIDS Campaign. Just a few minutes can trigger deadly heatstroke -- even on a seemingly mild day.

The Kids 'N Cars database is filled with hundreds of cases where children left in cars were crushed by rolling cars or died from heatstroke when the air-conditioning failed as parents watched cautiously from store or house windows, Fennell said.

Police said the 24-year-old San Jose security guard, Brian P. Gilbert, simply "forgot" his 5-month-old son, Kyle, was in the back seat of his Nissan sedan for more than four hours while watching cartoons with his brother-in-law Tuesday. Gilbert, who investigators said was devastated by his absent-mindedness, was charged with felony involuntary manslaughter and child endangerment Friday.

Fortunately, there are low-tech techniques that parents and other child caregivers can adopt, and high-tech solutions on the way.

For an easy reminder, Fennell said: "Just put a teddy bear in your child's car seat. When you put your baby in the car seat, you throw the teddy bear onto the front passenger seat. Every time you exit the car, the bear will remind you that you've got to put teddy back into the child seat -- and get your baby out."

After a NASA engineer's child died from heatstroke when the father forgot him last year at the agency's Langley, Va., research center, fellow engineer William "Chris" Edwards obtained a grant to develop an inexpensive sensor that can be adapted to any child seat, Fennell said.

If a parent walks away from the car without removing the child, a sensor detects the child's weight and triggers a chirping alarm on a small device attached to the driver's key ring.

By 2004, General Motors plans to offer vans and SUVs equipped with sensors that will detect a child breathing in a car on a hot day and honk the horn to alert passers-by. Eventually, all GM cars will use the technology.

Some safety advocates endorse the GM technology, but Fennell said her group is "totally opposed to any vehicle technology that basically tells parents it's OK to leave your kids in the car."

PROTECTING KIDS

Child-safety advocates urge the following precautions:

- Never leave your child unattended in a motor vehicle, even with the windows cracked open a few inches.
- Teach children not to play in, on or around cars.
- Never leave car keys where children can find them.
- Always keep the doors and trunk of cars locked when parked in the garage, driveway or near home.
- Never leave rear seat folded down. This should prevent children from climbing into unlocked cars and finding their way into a trunk from the inside.

Sources: Kid 'N Cars and the National SAFE KIDS Campaign / For more information, visit www.kidsncars.org and www.safekids.org.

Beyond the Plateau

If you've stopped achieving new results, the key to getting over the plateau is to vary your program. The human body is capable of adapting to just about any circumstance or stimulus. By switching things up a bit and varying your program by introducing some new elements, you'll likely find yourself beyond the plateau and back on the road to progress.

For the first two weeks of our award-winning customized programs, [click here](#). It's very important that you train the "right" muscle groups together, do the exercises in the correct order, do the right number of sets and repetitions for what you're trying to achieve, continually change you're program around so that you prevent boredom and overcome plateaus, etc. By using our programs, this is already done for you!

Notice that every workout within our programs is different - no two workouts are the same. We continually add variety and gradually increase the intensity as we introduce intermediate and advanced techniques. You need to continually "shock" your muscles to achieve new levels of results.

For example, if you do the Bench Press with a barbell on chest workout # 1, use a dumbbell for chest workout # 2. Just the same, if you started your chest routine on workout # 1 with Bench Press, on workout # 2 (for your chest) you should start your routine with the Incline Bench Press, Dips, Flys, or another effective chest exercise; just be sure to continually change the order.

If you always do the Bench Press first, your upper chest muscles never have the opportunity to be trained when they are fresh - they will always be somewhat fatigued from being indirectly trained on the Bench Press. But simply changing the exercise order of each muscle group will add variety to your workout and shock your muscles enough to force new results.

Another Fish Story

July 20, 2001

NUTRITION NEWS FOCUS "Nutrition news is important. We help you understand it!"

According to the latest news, frequent eating of fatty fish cuts the risk of getting prostate cancer by half. This claim is based on a study of over 6,000 Swedish men who were asked a single question about fish consumption in 1967 and then followed for 30 years. Subjects were asked whether oily fish accounted for none or a very little part of their diet, a small part, a moderate part, or a large part. The study appeared in the June 2, 2001 issue of The Lancet.

There were about 550 men who ate a lot of fish and only 124 who seldom or never ate fish in this group. Those who rarely ate fish also ate more red meat and processed meat but much less fruits and vegetables; they also smoked more and exercised less. These differences were adjusted for statistically, but the adjustment has to estimate the relative contributions of these factors, which are unknown.

HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW: Haven't changed your diet since 1967? That's one of the assumptions made here. It seems the men who didn't eat fish had a generally less healthy lifestyle. Also, there were only 14 cancer cases in that group, so don't rush out to the fish store based on this story.

Folic Acid Fortification

Since 1998, grain products in the U.S. food supply have been fortified with folate so that all women of reproductive age would consume about 400 micrograms per day from all sources. Canada, Australia, and Chile have voluntary or mandatory fortification policies, and several other countries are considering these. The main objective of adding folate is to prevent neural tube defects (NTD) in newborns – a type of birth defect that affects the spine or brain. There were about 4,000 pregnancies in the U.S. yearly affected by this problem.

A study in the June 20, 2001 edition of the Journal of the American Medical Association looked at the incidence of NTD before and after 1998. There was a reduction of 19 percent in NTD after addition of folate to the food supply, but a downward trend had been noted for several years before fortification, so the authors were not certain how much addition of folate helped. < <http://jama.ama-assn.org/issues/v285n23/abs/joc10010.html>>

HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW: An editorial accompanying the research report hails this study as proof that fortification is working. But it suggests there are still more questions to answer. The study was based on birth certificate data, so fetal deaths and stillbirths were missed. The prevalence of NTD at birth does not provide the true prevalence of NTD because terminated pregnancies are missed. These are the type of details that careful researchers worry about.

Editor's Note: Classic example of how and why reading about the latest research may be misleading because like anything else we read, the article or study is setting out to prove THEIR point. Still, there is every reason to believe that fortification and additional folate is in the best interest of women of child bearing age- and there is no harm. So drink up with fortified orange juice, and eat up with fortified cereal!

Exercise Chemical May Cause Migraines

Associated Press

IRA DREYFUSS Associated Press Writer July, 2001

WASHINGTON (AP) - For people who get migraine headaches, a burst of intense exercise can be a time bomb in the brain, setting off a migraine hours later, a study finds.

The fuse apparently is a chemical cascade released by the exercise, said researcher Joao Araujo e Sa of the Institute of Biomedical Research of Light and Image in Coimbra, Portugal. He presented his findings in June at the International Headache Congress in New York City.

It's a paradoxical result, because doctors commonly recommend exercise as a way to reduce the risk or severity of migraine.

"In our patients, we triggered that by exercise," Sa said. "We see exercise as probably a strong factor."

In Sa's study, 21 women with a history of migraine were compared to 12 who never got the headaches. All were given Wingate tests, an exercise test in which intensity is quickly ramped up to the point at which the participants can do no more. These women reached their limits in 30 seconds.

Of the women who never had a migraine, all remained migraine-free after the exercise test. However, of the 21 with a history of migraines, 11 had an attack. The migraines began 4¹/₂ hours to 5¹/₂ hours after the exercise, the study said.

The headache-prone women who didn't get a migraine after exercise might not have been working out hard enough, Sa said. Their blood samples showed lower levels of lactic acid, a waste chemical created in muscle by hard exercise, he said.

What seemed to trigger the headache was a spike in nitric oxide, a chemical that has been implicated before in migraine. After 30 minutes, nitric oxide levels in the migrainous women were more than double what they were at the start. Nitric oxide can dilate blood vessels. And migraine researchers believe that the dilated vessels can put pressure on nerve cells next to them in the brain, causing the headache.

It's been known that exertion can trigger exercise, and the amount of exercise varies from person to person, said Dr. Judy Lane, medical director at the Head Pain Center of the Colorado Neurological Institute in Englewood. Usually, the headaches come after longer periods of exertion, she said.

"I see patients all the time who say, 'I don't exercise because it gives me a headache,'" said Lane, who was not connected to the study.

"I thought the results were surprising but very interesting," said Dr. Alan M. Rapoport, director and cofounder of The New England Center for Headache, Stamford, Conn.

One surprise was the shortness of the exercise duration needed, Rapoport said. And one interesting implication is the support that the study gives to the idea that nitric oxide, as a blood vessel dilator, creates conditions for a migraine attack, Rapoport said. It's possible that science may find a way to reduce nitric oxide levels as a treatment for migraines, he said.

This is not to say exercise is bad for migraine sufferers; it's just a question of approach, Sa said. An adequate warm up can help them avoid migraine, he said.

Sa said his current research supports the idea that warming up slowly alleviates the sudden nitric acid dump that he blamed for the migraines in the 11 women in the study he reported in New York. But the new study is not completed, he said.

Migraine sufferers who exercise regularly report fewer and less severe headaches, Rapoport said. But people who start exercising as a way to control their migraines need to build up slowly - maybe from a start of only 3 minutes of light activity, he said.

However, the study does not prove the exercise or the nitric oxide caused the migraines, said Dr. Michael Welsh, vice chancellor for research at the University of Kansas. Migraines can have many triggers, depending on the individual, and they can be as common as bright light.

In the hours between the exercise and the attack, Sa's subjects could have run into one of their usual trigger factors, Welsh said.

On the Net:

Head Pain Center: <http://www.thecni.org/s-head-pain.htm> New England Center for Headache: <http://www.headache.net> Institute of Neurological Disorders and Strokes: <http://www.ninds.nih.gov/health-and-medical/pubs/migraineupdate.htm> Association of Canada: <http://www.migraine.ca/EXERCISE.HTM> and Drug Administration: <http://www.fda.gov/fdac/features/1998/398-pain.html>

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Vitamin C levels in Blood Predict Mortality Rates

Vitamin C has long been recognized as a key nutrient for good health. Now, a new study by the University of Cambridge has remarkably found blood levels of vitamin C to be a strong marker for overall mortality, specifically cardiovascular disease and cancer. The prospective study included 19,496 men and women aged 45-79. Researchers examined the relationship of plasma vitamin C levels and rates of heart disease, cancer, and overall mortality. Study participants completed a health survey and a seven-day diet history. Blood samples were collected on all participants.

Results indicated an inverse relationship between vitamin C levels in the blood and mortality rates. The higher the plasma vitamin C levels, the lower the risk of dying. They found that for

every 20 micromol/L of plasma ascorbic acid (the approximate amount of vitamin C in one serving of fruits and vegetables) there was:

- A 20% decrease in overall mortality
- A 30% decrease in mortality for cardiovascular disease
- A 15% decrease in mortality from cancer.

These reductions in mortality remain after adjusting for other possible confounding risk factors such as cholesterol, blood pressure, smoking, BMI, diabetes, and use of supplements. Those with the highest vitamin C levels (top 20%) had a remarkable 50% reduction in mortality from all causes compared to those with the least vitamin C (bottom 20%).

When people taking supplements of vitamin C were examined independently, they found no association between vitamin C supplements and mortality. **The researchers thus concluded that plasma vitamin C is a marker for the amount of fruits and vegetables eaten in the diet and that the protective affect seen is largely from fruits and vegetables. For every increase of one serving of fruits and vegetables, the overall mortality rate drops a remarkable 20%.**

It's amazing to see how such a simple and small change in the diet can have such a profound affect on overall risk of mortality. In this study, the change in mortality from the second to the fourth quintile resulted in a 30% decrease in death from all causes. That is equivalent to only an additional 1.5 to 2 servings of fruits and vegetables per day.

The researchers summarized by saying, "our findings suggest that an increase in dietary intake of foods rich in ascorbic acid (vitamin C) might have benefits for cardiovascular disease and all-cause mortality in men and women and adds to the large amount of evidence that lends support to the benefit of fruit and vegetable intake.

Reference: The Lancet, Vol 357:657-663, March 3, 2001

Trans Fatty Acids and the Risk of Heart Disease

The evidence continues to accumulate that trans fatty acids raise your risk of heart disease, perhaps more than we used to think. The Nurse's health study¹ showed that as little as a 2% (of calories) increase in trans fatty acids in the diet raised the risk of coronary heart disease by over 50%. This increase in risk remains even after adjusting for smoking, BMI, exercise, alcohol, vitamin E intake, saturated fat intake, and polyunsaturated fat intake.

Now a new Dutch study of 667 men in the Netherlands², studied for 10 years, also shows an increased risk of coronary heart disease in those men eating the most trans fatty acids in their diet. They found that a 2% increase of calories from trans fatty acids in the diet (men in the top third) had a 33% increase risk of death from coronary heart disease. This increased risk remains even after adjusting for possible confounders such as BMI, smoking, use of vitamin supplements, calories eaten, alcohol use, specific types of other fats eaten, cholesterol, and dietary fiber intake.

Where do trans fatty acids in the diet come from? Primarily vegetable oils that are "partially hydrogenated". Look for this word on your food labels. Foods that are highest in trans fatty acids are:

- Margarine
- Shortening
- Baked goods made with the above ingredients: cake, cookies, pie crust, pastry, most breads and rolls,
- Deep fried foods such as French fries
- Most snack foods such as chips
- Most fast foods
- Most crackers
- Most processed, convenience foods

To choose foods free of trans fatty acids, just make sure the words "partially hydrogenated" oils is not on the food ingredient list. You can also find "trans fat free" margarines in most grocery stores. I prefer the Spectrum brand. You can also use other healthy spreads in place of margarine or butter such as: nut butters, olive oil with roasted garlic, humus, low sugar fruit spreads, and mashed avocado. I actually like these alternates better than regular margarine anyway. Keep in mind that only 2% of your calories is a very small amount. 2% of 2000 calories is only four to five grams of trans fat daily, the amount that increases risk of a heart attack by as much as 33-50%.

For more information on trans fatty acids in foods see the [table](#) of common foods and their % of fat calories as trans fatty acids.

References:

1. Nurse's health study, New England Journal of Medicine, November 20, 1997.
2. The Lancet Vol 357:746-51, March 10, 2001

Treating Depression with St John's Wort

St. John's wort has become increasingly popular as a "natural" herb treatment for depression. Some past studies hinted that St. John's Wort might be effective as a treatment for depression. Other researchers felt that most past studies had flaws in their design undermining confidence in their results.

To do a more definitive study, 11 academic medical centers conducted a joint study on 200 adult patients diagnosed with major depression. Patients were randomly divided (double blind study) into a control (received a placebo) and experimental group (receiving St John's wort) for a period of 8 weeks. Patients kept records of symptoms, using a standardized depression scale, every 2 weeks. A score of 20 or higher on the depression scale indicated depression. The average score at the beginning of the study was 22.

After eight weeks both groups improved significantly. The St John's wort treatment group had reduced depression scores to 14.2 and the control (placebo) group had also reduced

depression scores to 14.9. However, there was no significant difference between the two groups. In other words, the placebo was as effective as the treatment, thus, the researchers concluded, "In this study, St John's wort was not effective for treatment of major depression." The authors did point out that St John's wort was well tolerated with headache being the only symptom more common in the treatment group.

Were the patient's depression symptoms helped by the treatment? Yes, but so were the symptoms of the group on the placebo. This points out the power of the body to heal itself when a person has hope and belief that what they are doing will be beneficial. Using the power of the mind can be a significant help in combating most health problems. Belief and hope promote health.

Reference: *JAMA*, April 18, 2000 -- Vol 285:1978-1986.

Preventing Diabetes Through Lifestyle Change

Many studies have shown that people who are overweight, eat poor diets, and are inactive are more likely to become obese. There were few good studies, however, that actually showed a decrease in diabetes in high-risk individuals if they adopted a healthier lifestyle. A new study in Finland now provides strong evidence that you can reduce your chances of getting diabetes by improving your health practices.

Finnish researchers recruited 523 overweight individuals who also had impaired glucose tolerance (elevated blood sugar but not yet diabetes). They randomly divided these people into two groups, a control group (who received general information but no structured intervention) and an experimental, lifestyle improvement group. The experimental group had specific health improvement goals:

- Reduce body weight by 5% or more.
- Reduce the intake of saturated fat in the diet and eat moderately of all fat (less than 30% of calories).
- Increase dietary fiber in the diet to at least 30-35 grams per day (by eating more whole grains, fruits, and vegetables).
- And increase physical activity to at least 30 minutes of exercise daily and a total of 4 hours per week. Activities included brisk walking, jogging, skiing, and swimming.

The experimental group met with a dietitian at least 4 times each year. They were also given instruction on developing an exercise program. 87% of the experimental group maintained their exercise program throughout the study. The average weight loss in the experimental group was 8-9 pounds. After four years, the experimental group reached an average of three of the five health improvement objectives and reduced their odds of getting diabetes by 58% compared to the control group. Those who had at least a 5% weight loss reduced their odds of getting diabetes by 70%. Those who exercised at least four hours per week reduced their risk by 80%. The better they complied with the health goals the lower their risk of diabetes. None of the

individuals in the experimental group who achieved all five of the health improvement goals developed diabetes.

This study certainly illustrates the strong affect a healthy lifestyle can have in preventing diabetes, even with modest lifestyle changes in people who are at increased risk for diabetes.

Reference: The New England Journal of Medicine, May 3, 2001.

Excess Weight and Cancer

Excess body fat is linked to increased risk for many cancers including kidney, colon, prostate, gallbladder, endometrium, and breast. Researchers in the European Union recently conducted a study to determine what percentage of these cancers is caused by overweight. Results are shown below:

- **endometrial cancer 39%**
- **kidney cancer 25%**
- **gallbladder cancer 25%**
- **colon cancer 25%**

Overall they estimate that one out of every 20 cancer deaths is caused by excess body weight. Maintaining a healthy weight is one good way to reduce your risk of early death from cancer.

Reference: Bergstrom A, et al, Overweight as an avoidable cause of cancer in Europe, *Int J Cancer* 91:421-430

Treating Depression with Exercise

The most common form of treatment for depression is medication. However, there are alternative therapies to try as well. Dr. James Blumenthal, PhD from Duke University experimented with exercise. He took 156 people who had been diagnosed with clinical depression and randomly divided them into two treatment groups; one with normal antidepressant medication and the other with regular exercise. The exercise group gradually improved their fitness levels until they were able to run at a moderate pace for 1/2 hour most days of the week.

After 16 weeks he re-evaluated the two groups and found that the exercisers had improved their depression scores just as much as those taking medication. He also tested mental abilities such as concentration, planning, and organization. Only the exercisers showed improvement in these mental functions. Those on medication showed no improvement.

Dr. Blumenthal suggests that the mental improvement most likely comes from improved circulation and blood flow to the brain. The bottom line is -- regular, moderate-exercise can help you feel better and think more clearly!

Births - Latest Trends

The National Vital Statistic System has just released the latest annual report on births in the United States. Here are a few highlights:

- Overall birth rate increased slightly to 3,959,417 for the year.
- Teen birth rate dropped 3 percent.
- Smoking by pregnant women dropped overall to 12.6%. However, the smoking rate among pregnant teens increased. Smoking during pregnancy nearly doubles the risk of low birth weight (from 7.2% to 12.1%), increases infant mortality, and has negative consequences for child health and development.
- About 15% of pregnant mothers used alcohol during their pregnancy. Even low to moderate use of alcohol during pregnancy can jeopardize birth outcomes including mental retardation and birth defects.
- Pre-term births (less than 37 weeks gestation) increased again, up 11% since 1990. Low birth weight has risen by 9% since 1990. Teen mothers and older mothers are most likely to have low birth weight infants.
- The number of twins born increased to 114,307 per year.
- Cesarean birth increased by 4%.
- Number of births to unmarried women increased 1% to 1,308,560 per year.
- The sex ratio of all births was 1,049 males for every 1,000 female babies. This is a consistent pattern over the last 50+ years.
- August had the most births; February the least.
- The average weight gain of the mother during pregnancy was 30.5 pounds. Adequate weight gain during pregnancy helps prevent underweight births.

Factors that can help improve healthy births include:

- Good nutrition and adequate weight gain by mothers (25 to 35 pounds for women of normal weight, more if they are underweight).
- Not smoking during pregnancy.
- Not using alcohol or drugs during pregnancy.
- Taking folic acid (a B-vitamin, 400 mcg/day) during the entire potential child bearing years.
- Preconception and early pregnancy (first trimester) medical care.
- Age of mother. Lowest rates for mothers with low birth weight infants are age 25 to 34. Rates are highest for mothers less than 20 or older than 40.

Reference: National Vital Statistics Reports, Births: Final Data for 1999, April 17, 2001.

Online Health Assessment Quizzes!

Watch for our special pricing this summer on our QuickCheck™ online assessment modules!

The QuickChecks by Wellsource are turnkey health assessments that your organization adds to its existing Web site or intranet. The QuickCheck titles help identify health risks for individuals, and encourage them to improve their overall health. Each assessment includes up to 18 questions, real-time reporting, and an expansive information center with prevention methods, behavioral goals, and other specific recommendations for achieving optimum health.

QuickCheck™ assessment titles include the following:

- Managing Stress
- Achieving a Healthy Lifestyle
- Preventing Skin Cancer
- Your Risk of Heart Disease
- Evaluating Your Nutrition
- Preventing Cancer

To demo our **Managing Stress** title, just click on <http://wellsource.com> or copy the URL and paste it into your browser.

Call us at 1.800.533.9355, and ask us how the QuickCheck™ Online Assessments can work with your current wellness systems.

Making Sense of Food Labels

Food manufactures must now follow strict disclosure guidelines. Many of these "buzzwords" appear on a variety of food products. The actual Food and Drug Administration (FDA) definitions are as follows:

Free

- An amount so small it can be considered as having "zero" or "none."
- Fat free -- less than ½ gram (0.5 g) of fat per serving. The product cannot have any added fat or oil.
- Cholesterol free -- less than 2 milligrams (2 mg) of cholesterol per serving and 2 grams (2 g) or less saturated fat per serving.
- The “% fat free” is based on the weight of fat compared to the total weight of the product, but the foods must meet the "low fat" definition.

Low fat

- 3 grams (3 g) of fat or less per serving. Also no more than 30% of total calories can come from fat.

Low in Cholesterol

- 20 milligrams (20 mg) or less of cholesterol and 2 grams (2 g) or less of saturated fat per serving.

Since your body makes cholesterol from saturated fat, the USDA established the saturated fat limit to prevent low-cholesterol foods from being mislabeled and to prevent customers from believing that over-consumption of this product would not increase their cholesterol levels.

Reduced Fat

- At least 25% less fat per serving than the food named by comparison (a similar product).

Light

- The food contains one-third fewer calories or half the fat of the food it is being compared with.
- "Light in sodium" is allowed if the food has at least 50% less sodium than the food it is being compared with.
- "Light" is allowed to describe color or texture. If the word "light" means "light in color," the label must say that.

ABS! The Truth on How to Achieve a Toned Tummy and Slim Waistline

Mar.10 2001

It often seems like the hardest thing in the world to do: "Reducing your waistline and toning your abs". People all over the world spend thousands of dollars per day attempting to accomplish the "SIX PACK". I have regular requests asking for advice and quick fixes to remedy the storing of body fat around the waistline and how to create a firm toned midsection.

The Truth about achieving a toned tummy and being able to actually see that "muscle tone" is to get rid of the layer of body fat covering your abs. That's right! It doesn't matter how many crunches you do, or what new machine you use from the continuous advertisements that hound us day in and day out. If you don't reduce your body fat you will never see those strong-toned abs.

Spot Reduction - A Fallacy!

You cannot spot reduce. Although you can change areas of your body with resistance exercise e.g. weight training techniques like toning, body shaping and body building etc. You cannot just

train or exercise one body part alone, such as your abs, and expect to see a whole new look. Achieving a six pack or muscle tone in your abdominal area is a lot more involved and I intend to show you how to go about reaching your new slim and toned waistline by following a few simple steps and hints.

A familiar tune...

As I mentioned above I frequently receive emails of desperation with requests such as "I am happy with the rest of my body, but my wide and fatty waistline ruins my body shape. Can you give me one exercise that will fix this"? Or "I have an occasion coming up and I want to reduce my waistline, can you recommend a supplement and some special crunches that will make me lose 10 kilos around my waist within the next 6 weeks?" And "I perform 200 crunches per day and I still don't see any difference in my waistline, what am I doing wrong?"

One More Thing Before We get Started - **Don't Rely On Gimmicks!**

One thing I am very concerned about is the fact that most of us want to believe that some miraculous piece of equipment, or pills, will give us that toned tummy that the sexy girls and guys have in the ads for these types of products. Believe me, before I started in the fitness industry years ago I also thought if I spent hundreds of dollars it would work for me too. I was so upset when I found out that I actually had to work at it and there was no such miracle cure or quick fix solution.

The Difference Between Firming Up Your Abs and Reducing Your Body Fat Around Your Waistline

Now that you know that the only way to trim down your waistline is to reduce the amount of body fat around that particular area you are probably thinking, "where do I go from here?" First you need to realize that a slim waist doesn't necessarily mean that you have a toned midsection. As you know to firm up your abdominal area you need to perform crunches or some kind of resistance program. Many men and women do have slimmer waists or flat stomachs, but they can still lack tone and firmness. This where the "resistance training" comes in.

"Why does my Waistline Grow Instead of Shrink when I Perform Crunches?"

One of the most common reasons that I have found for this occurring is a diet full of fat, calories: from sugar foods and junk food and too many starchy carbs towards the end of the day. Most people think that if they perform a few crunches every day their waistline will magically turn into a six-pack! WRONG! How could you possibly expect to achieve a six-pack when you are consuming foods that are increasing the actual layer of body-fat that prevents the ab muscles from being seen in the first place? I know this sounds harsh but if you want to have a waistline or abs that look like you've put the effort in to produce them then that's exactly what YOU are going to have to do. If you are eating all of the wrong foods while increasing the muscle growth in your ab region you are actually "bulking up" this area. Why? Because you will have an increase in both muscle and body-fat - which will therefore increase your measurements.

"So how can I Firm Up my Abs and Reduce My Waistline too?"

If you read through the steps below you will grasp a better understanding of how to attain the above goals. In no time you can get started on improving your training program to help you achieve the waistline you've always dreamed of having.

Steps / Hints to Help Set You on the Right Track to Getting Started on Your New Ab Program

When you read through the following steps and hints you will most probably find that there are quite a few of them that you aren't currently following or didn't know about. For each step I have included a list of things you need to remember when training your abdominals. I have tried to keep it brief but informative. You may like to use the following steps / hints like a checklist so you can remember each point when starting your NEW ABS program.

1) Resistance Training Program

Train your lower abs first

- Breathe out as you crunch up. If you have your hands behind your neck, make sure you keep your elbows back, and crunch up using your shoulders. (This will help prevent neck soreness)
- Keep your lower back pushed into the floor or bench. Unless you are advanced, and have sufficient abdominal and lower back strength, do not perform exercises that encourage you to arch your back up. If you find in general that your back arches keep your knees bent and closer to your body so that your lower back is pushing into the floor or bench.
- Don't over train your abs. Three quality training sessions per week is ample. Remember muscle needs recovery time to grow. It's muscle growth that increases your muscle tone in your midsection. Over training will actually deplete the muscle instead of increasing it.
- Don't go overboard with performing loads of repetitions. Rather than trying to achieve 5 x 100 crunches per exercise, hold for a count of 2-5, each rep you perform using 4-5 x 12 burning reps. This will get you better results. Your goal is to damage the muscle to promote muscle growth for increased muscle tone.
- Don't just train your abs. You need to be performing a full-body program rather than just concentrating on your abdominal region. Focus on training each body part so that you can achieve a "toned and firm look" all over.

2) Low-Fat Eating Program

- Reduce your fat content in your meals. Do not cook with oil, use a low fat cooking spray instead.
- Reduce, and I mean really cut back, on your fried foods. Reduce your margarine and butter usage to only a small amount or none at all.
- Increase lean protein (to assist with muscle growth)
- Eat fresh salads and veggies
- Towards the end of the day reduce your intake of carbs like potato, rice, pasta, cereals and bread. Still include them in your meals but don't pig out on them. Fill up on green veggies instead.

- Don't use fatty gravies on your meals or meat, use very low oil or no oil gravies instead Don't use oily salad dressings, go for low oil or no oil with them too.
- Check the fat content on the labels of tins and cans. Cut the fat off your meat and grill it.
- Eat six meals smaller regular meals per day rather than having one or two large meals per day.
- Always have breakfast! Use egg whites rather than eggs with yolks. You can actually purchase egg whites in cartons, they can normally be found in the freezer section of your supermarket.
- Have one day off your eating program per week.
- If you have trouble keeping up with your protein intake use low fat, low carbohydrate, high protein drinks. There are some great flavors ranging from vanilla, chocolate, banana, strawberry etc. Purchase a shake that is easy to mix and has quality protein content. You can use these as a morning or afternoon snack. Click here for more info on the benefits of protein...http://www.virtualfitnesstrainer.com/articles/Can_Protein_Increase_Your_Muscle_Tone.htm and why you need it to help you reach your training goals.

3) Fat Burning Program

To reduce your ab region, and the rest of your body, of that extra body fat you will need to increase your fat burning exercise.

- Vary your fat-burning times for each session.
- Vary the intensity.
- Increase the amount of sessions you perform each week - don't over do it though. Over fat burning e.g. Fat burning twice per day, 7 days per week is classified as over training and will deplete your muscle. For a faster metabolism 3 times per week is suitable. For a slow metabolism 5-6 times per week will give a good kick-start to losing body fat. You can then decrease this as your metabolism increases
- Swap from treadmill to bike to treadmill etc so your body, and you, don't get bored with your training program. If you have access to several different cardio machines you can alternate between them.
- Fat Burn before breakfast to encourage your body to burn away at your stored body fats. Fat Burn on an empty stomach. In between meals or first thing in the morning.
- Don't fat burn for any longer than 40 mins each session maximum.

ABS Exercises

Floor Crunches - (you can also use your ab roller/ frame for this exercise)

- Lie flat on your back on the floor, legs bent, feet flat, pushing your lower back into the floor.
- Clasp your hands behind your neck, keeping your elbows back, in line with your head.
- Crunch up slightly, raising your head and shoulders, breathing out as you crunch.
- As you crunch up push your lower back into the floor and squeeze your tummy as tight as possible.

- Lower your head and shoulders back down to the floor and repeat. You should feel a burning sensation in your upper tummy area and midsection.

Lower Ab Crunches –

- Lie flat on your back on the floor, legs raised, knees bent and lower legs folded.
- Push your lower back into the floor.
- Place your hands by your sides, palms facing the floor.
- Raise your backside and hips slightly, breathing out at the same time.
- As you crunch up push your lower back into the floor and squeeze the lower section of your tummy (pelvis region) as tight as possible.
- Lower your hips and backside back down to the floor and repeat. You should feel a burning sensation in your lower tummy area and upper pelvis.

Side Crunches (you can also use your ab roller for this exercise)

- Lie flat on your back on the floor, have your knees bent and legs twisted to one side.
- Your lower body should be twisted to the side but your upper body should remain straight and flat on the floor. Have your hands by the sides of your head and your elbows back.
- Crunch up slightly pushing your lower back into the floor, raising your head and shoulders, squeezing the side of your waist.
- Lower your head and shoulders back down to the floor. Repeat the exercise until you have finished your reps. Then change to the other side.

Setting Yourself Some Goals

Achieving a toned, slimmer midsection is possible if you are prepared to make the above changes to your lifestyle. You will be surprised at the results you receive if you dedicate yourself for a solid 12 - 16 weeks. The hardest part is getting started, but once you are on your way you won't regret it. Set yourself monthly realistic goals that are possible to achieve. Use goal clothing or a tape measure to monitor your changing waistline. Re-measure every 4 weeks. Don't forget about the good 'ol fat calipers too. If you are keen to measure your body fat click here for a very affordable fat caliper kit with full instructions.

http://www.virtualfitnesstrainer.com/thefitnessshop/virtual_fitness_trainer_sports_shop.htm or purchase them at your local pharmacy or chemist.

This article was written by: © Mandy Gibbons 2001 Personal Fitness Trainer / Consultant

Inspiration Point

MOVING THOUGHTS

Maybe God wants us to meet a few wrong people before meeting the right one so that when we finally meet the right person, we will know how to be grateful for that gift.

When the door of happiness closes, another opens, but often times we look so long at the closed door that we don't see the one that has been opened for us.

The best kind of friend is the kind you can sit on a porch and swing with, never say a word, and then walk away feeling like it was the best conversation you've ever had.

It's true that we don't know what we've got until we lose it, but it's also true that we don't know what we've been missing until it arrives.

Giving someone all your love is never an assurance that they'll love you back! Don't expect love in return; just wait for it to grow in their heart but if it doesn't, be content it grew in yours. It takes only a minute to get a crush on someone, an hour to like someone, and a day to love someone, but it takes a lifetime to forget someone.

Don't go for looks; they can deceive. Don't go for wealth; even that fades away. Go for someone who makes you smile because it takes only a smile to make a dark day seem bright. Find the one that makes your heart smile.

There are moments in life when you miss someone so much that you just want to pick them from your dreams and hug them for real!

Dream what you want to dream; go where you want to go; be what you want to be, because you have only one life and one chance to do all the things you want to do.

May you have enough happiness to make you sweet, enough trials to make you strong, enough sorrow to keep you human, enough hope to make you happy.

Always put yourself in others' shoes. If you feel that it hurts you, it probably hurts the other person, too.

The happiest of people don't necessarily have the best of everything; they just make the most of everything that comes along their way.

Happiness lives for those who cry, those who hurt, those who have searched, and those who have tried, for only they can appreciate the importance of people who have touched their lives. Love begins with a smile, grows with a kiss and ends with a tear. The brightest future will always be based on a forgotten past, you can't go on well in life until you let go of your past failures and heartaches.

EXPECT IT

Rarely will you ever accomplish more than you expect to accomplish. So get in the habit of expecting the best. Your expectations by themselves do not create your reality, but they do indeed set the direction for it.

What do you expect to achieve today, this week, or this month? How do you expect other people to relate to you? Expectations guide our actions. When we know what is expected it gives us a clear plan for exactly what to do.

Whatever you sincerely expect, you will work for, you will nurture, you will persist for and give

power to. Those things will serve to make it happen. Expectations powerfully influence both your conscious and subconscious actions.

If you expect the day to be dreary and boring, most likely it will be. When you expect the day to be productive and fulfilling, you'll find yourself acting to satisfy those expectations. Make it a point to expect the best, and then commit to following those expectations.



Zucchini Parmesan Yield: 8 servings

Ingredients:

- 1-1/2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1-1/2 tablespoons Italian seasoning
- 7 tomatoes, wedged
- 4 cups zucchini, sliced
- 3 cups non/low fat mozzarella cheese, shredded
- 3 tablespoons non/low fat Parmesan cheese, grated

Directions:

- Heat oil in a nonstick skillet over medium heat.
- Add garlic and herbs and sauté for 1 minute.
- Add tomatoes and sauté an additional 4 minutes.
- Add zucchini and simmer 3 minutes.
- Drain excess liquid from skillet.
- Stir in half the mozzarella and half the Parmesan.
- Place mixture in a baking dish coated with nonstick cooking spray (nonfat) and top with remaining cheese.
- Bake at 400 degrees F for 10-15 minutes.

Nutritional Information: Serving size: 1 cup; Calories: 245; Fat: 4.5 g; Cholesterol: 2 mg; Protein: 25 g; Carbohydrates: 30 g; Fiber: 9 g; Sodium: 645 mg

Peanut Butter Protein Oatmeal Yield: 1 serving

Ingredients:

- 1 ounce package of plain oatmeal (I use [Quaker Instant Oatmeal](#) – Regular Flavor)
- ½ scoop of whey protein powder (I use [AST VP2 Whey Protein](#) - Vanilla)

- 1 cup of water
- 1 tablespoon peanut butter (I use *Adams 100% Natural Peanut Butter – Crunchy*)

Directions:

- Empty oatmeal packet into a microwave-safe bowl.
- Add protein powder to bowl with oatmeal.
- Add 1 cup of water.
- Stir first three ingredients until well mixed.
- Microwave on High for approximately 60 - 90 seconds.
- Be careful when removing oatmeal from microwave, as it may be hot.
- Stir thoroughly until oatmeal, protein powder, and water are mixed well.
- Stir in peanut butter and let cool for at least a minute.

Nutritional Information: Serving size: entire bowl of oatmeal with protein powder and peanut butter
Calories: 250; Fat: 10 g; Cholesterol: 0 mg; Protein: 19 g; Carbohydrates: 24 g; Fiber: 4 g; Sodium: 175 mg

Lentil Loaf Yield: 8 slices

Ingredients:

- 3 cups cooked lentils
- 1-1/2 cups oatmeal
- 3/4 cup onion, chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 3 cups tomato sauce
- 2-1/4 teaspoons Italian seasoning

Directions:

- Combine all ingredients in a bowl.
- Mix thoroughly and press mixture into a loaf pan coated with nonstick cooking spray (nonfat).
- Bake at 350 degrees F for 50 minutes.

Nutritional Information: Serving Size: 1 cup; Calories: 240; Fat: 1 g; Cholesterol: 0 mg; Protein: 15 g; Carbohydrates: 35 g; Fiber: 10 g; Sodium: 35 mg

Black- eyed Pea and Vegetable Salad Yield: 6 servings

Ingredients:

- 2 1/2 cups black-eyed peas
- 1 cup corn kernels
- 1 cup carrots, diced
- 1 cup celery, diced
- 1 cup green pepper, diced
- 1 1/2 tablespoons red onion, chopped
- 1/2 cup cilantro, chopped
- 1/4 cup seasoned rice vinegar

Directions:

- Bring 6 cup of water to a boil. Add the black-eyed peas. Allow to boil for 20-25 minutes. Drain and set aside.

- In another pot, bring 6 cups of water to a boil. Add the corn, carrots, and celery. Boil for 1-2 minutes. Drain well.
- In a large bowl, combine the peas, corn, carrots, celery, green pepper, onion, and cilantro. Pour the vinegar over and mix well.

Nutritional Information: Serving size: 1 cup; Calories: 150; Fat: 1 g; Cholesterol: 0 mg; Protein: 5 g; Carbohydrates: 23 g; Fiber: 3 g; Sodium: 340 mg

Ostrich Fajitas

Yield: 6 servings

Ingredients:

- 1 pound of ostrich steaks (One of the very leanest, high protein meats. I get mine at [USAOstrich](#))
- 1 green pepper, thinly sliced
- 1 onion, thinly sliced
- 1 tomato, chopped
- 2 tablespoons lime juice or 1 whole lime
- ¼ cup chicken broth
- ½ tablespoon olive oil
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce (low sodium)
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- ¼ tablespoon cilantro, minced
- ¼ cup nonfat sour cream
- 1 cup salsa
- 6 whole-wheat tortillas

Directions:

- Cut ostrich steaks into thin strips. In a large bowl, toss together meat, green pepper, tomato, and onion and chili.
- In a small bowl, mix lime juice, broth, olive oil, soy sauces, and garlic. Pour over chicken and vegetable mixture to marinate.
- Add 2-3 tablespoons of marinade mixture to nonstick pan (nonfat). Cook meat over medium heat for 5-7 minutes; add 2 tablespoons more of marinade mixture and all vegetables; cook for 5 more minutes or until done.
- Wrap in warm tortilla with nonfat sour cream and salsa.

Nutritional Information: Serving size: 1 fajita; Calories: 245; Fat: 1 g; Cholesterol: 60 mg; Protein: 22 g; Carbohydrates: 34 g; Fiber: 3.5 g; Sodium: 350 mg



This newsletter is intended solely for the Coast Guard Mid-Atlantic Region in conjunction with the Coast Guard Mid-Atlantic Work-Life Health Promotion Program. It is designed to offer Coast Guard Personnel some of the latest health information to assist them in developing and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Articles in this publication are taken from various health resources and are not specifically endorsed by the Coast Guard or the federal government. The contents within are not a replacement for professional medical evaluation, advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Please see your physician or other health care provider for medical advice.

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